

## BOOK REVIEW

*Crop Protection Information: An International Perspective.* Edited by K.M. Harris and P.R. Scott. ISBN 0 85198 636 6, 1989. 321 pp. price £35. C.A.B. International, Wallingford, U.K.

At first glance this is a perplexing title and perhaps 'Crop Protection Information: Needs, sources and dissemination' would have been more specific but ultimately attract less attention. The book comprises papers presented to an International Crop Protection Information Workshop held at CAB International, Wallingford, UK, in 1989, and findings of a commissioned survey of electronic databases. There are four sections containing 16 chapters and two appendices and the full spectrum of pests (invertebrates, plant pathogens, weeds and vertebrates) is considered.

Section 1 discusses a) information needs of farmers, extension and research services, the private sector, and monitoring and regulatory agencies, b) roles of aural, visual, printed and electronic communication media and draws on the results of a questionnaire on information usage and availability - information in printed form is still rated much higher than in electronic form, and c) developments in information dissemination techniques, highlighting the advances in telecommunications, CR-ROM technology, and expert systems.

Section 2 illustrates the crop protection information requirements for a few specific crops. Rice is the first example, and a clear account is given of the information material provided or required by the researcher, extension worker and farmer. IPM is recognized as knowledge-intensive technology which necessitates development of linkage processes between researcher and farmer. The deficiencies relating to pest problems in developing countries and improvements in access to the range of information sources are highlighted in a chapter on wheat. Research on tropical perennials (particularly coffee), types of information and its dissemination are discussed in the final chapter of this section which pleads "succinct, coherent, easily accessible information on an international scale for the benefit of non-specialists". Don't we all?

Section 3 deals with regional and country perspectives covering Europe, francophone Africa, Kenya, Peninsula Malaysia, East Asia (primarily China), the Pacific, the Caribbean, Brazil and North America. Chapters are varied in content, some providing quite detailed accounts of crop protection problems and practices and the various forms of and needs for information. Crop protection information is abundant but there are considerable shortfalls in availability, particularly in developing and non-English speaking countries. Unfortunately, Australia isn't represented in this section which is a pity as rapid advances in electronic crop protection information are occurring here and the problems of developing such systems would be of value to those still contemplating this course.

Appendix 1 includes a series of tables relating to a survey of 103 electronic databases covering pesticides, general agricultural crop protection information, expert systems or management programs, pest or crop lists and quarantine. Workshop recommendations are presented in Appendix 2 with the many proposals categorised under crops, organisms, plant quarantine, IPM and pesticides. The realisation that there are "some 40 countries without any

formal system for registering pesticides or regulating their use" illustrates the huge differences in crop protection perceptions throughout the world.

The book comes in compact hardcover form, well printed and at a 'realistic' price. The text is easy to read and the editors have done an excellent job in eliminating errors. The only ones I encountered were 1. on p. 200 'monocrotophos' is read as being an organochlorine, and 2. on p. 218 *Cydia molesta* (oriental fruit moth) would appear to be a fly (although I suspect a line maybe missing from the sentence). Agricultural extension workers and students, quarantine personnel and field-based researchers in plant protection will be particularly interested in this book. However, it will most likely find a place in departmental libraries rather than private reference collections.

H.A.C. Fay,  
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